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ABSTRACT

In an effort to address child welfare service problems, the state of Kansas shifted responsibility to private contractors in 1996. Despite a considerable investment of new resources and significant improvements, serious problems remain. This report explores what is needed to "level the playing field" for the roughly 6,700 children in state custody in Kansas by focusing on a few factors to improve their chances of becoming successful adults. The report details specific areas of recommendation, including the following: (1) strengthen prevention programs that can help keep children with their families; (2) enhance the ability of child welfare providers to respond with multi-tiered services; (3) effectively represent children in the court system; (4) review and refine child welfare outcomes and performance measures; (5) improve communication with, and training of, foster parents; (6) prepare children for living independently once they leave the system; and (7) provide incentives to adopt hard-to-place children. The report concludes with a list of Kansas child welfare resources. (HTH)

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ED 475 973

A SPECIAL REPORT

BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD

EMERGING ISSUES IN CHILD WELFARE

PS 031240

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Best Interest of the Child

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Foreword

Kansas made a landmark decision to privatize child welfare services in 1996. In an effort to address service problems, the state shifted responsibility to private contractors. Despite a considerable investment of new resources and significant improvements, serious problems still exist.

The bottom line is we are failing many of our most vulnerable children. This failure in not unique to Kansas: fixing the child welfare system is a daunting challenge for most states. Although from time to time there are attempts at sweeping reform, it is not clear that in Kansas or elsewhere the challenge has been fully met.

In the meantime, there are roughly 6,700 children in state custody in Kansas. This report explores what we need to do to level the playing field for them by focusing on a few things to improve their chances of becoming successful adults, including:

- Strengthen prevention programs that can help keep children with their families
- Enhance the ability of child welfare providers to respond with multi-tiered services
- Effectively represent children in the court system
- Review and refine child welfare outcomes and performance measures
- Improve communication with, and training of, foster parents
- Prepare children for living independently once they leave the system
- Provide incentives to adopt hard-to-place children

The reality for too many children in the Kansas child welfare system is multiple placements, changing staff and inadequate legal representation. The reality for too many youth aging out of the system is no family to anchor them, and very little preparation for living on their own.

Unless we invest smarter to protect our most vulnerable children, their likely future may include unemployment and underemployment, public assistance and time in prison. In light of current economic conditions, improving services to these children may seem out of reach. In reality, we can't afford to pass up opportunities to prevent costly problems in the long run.

Kansas policymakers should explore ways to change the system to not only protect children who need to be removed from the home, but to serve families at risk so most children can remain safe at home. An emphasis on family support and prevention programs has the potential to decrease crisis-oriented interventions in the first place.

Making improvements would not mean that we can or should give up on deep system reform. That should remain our long-term goal, but until we get there we have an obligation to make what improvements are possible.

The ability to make good legislation depends on good information. Please contact me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Gary Brunk
Executive Director
Kansas Action for Children

Strengthen Prevention Programs

Child Protective Service Reform

With the number of investigations of abuse and neglect by Kansas Child Protective Services (CPS) in recent years reaching nearly 26,000, the time for systematic reform is now.

Kansas needs to transform CPS so it not only has the capacity to protect children who need to be removed from the home but is also equipped to serve families at risk so most children can be safe at home. CPS must also be ready to respond to different family situations through different remedies.

The traditional CPS model functions like a light switch. If reported child maltreatment is substantiated with evidence, the light goes on and the flow of services begins. As a result of overwhelming caseloads and limited resources, if the case does not fall within the definition of abuse or neglect, the light goes off and families' needs are not addressed. Experts say some situations in the latter category could benefit from attention to prevent CPS involvement in the future.

An emphasis should be placed on developing a continuum of family support and prevention programs to avoid crisis-oriented interventions in the first place. Several states are implementing CPS reforms that seek to both protect children and support families. The key elements of these efforts include:

Multi-tiered response

In a multi-tiered response system, reports of abuse and neglect are evaluated according to the severity of the threat to the child. Cases where there seems to be sexual and/or serious physical abuse and neglect are referred for a traditional investigation and possible removal of the child. Cases where there seems to be no immediate threat to the child receive a family assessment and are referred to appropriate services.

Family assessment

A family assessment is an important component of these reforms. In the traditional CPS investigation, the caseworker's primary responsibility is to obtain the facts that can be the basis for a court's finding of abuse or neglect. The role of the caseworker doing a family assessment is quite different, since the emphasis is on determining if services can be provided that will allow the child to remain safe at home.

Community-based staff and community collaborations

In these reforms, CPS staff is often placed in communities with significant numbers of abuse and neglect reports. CPS staff also involves community organizations in collaborative efforts. In some cases, teams made up of CPS staff and workers from other public and private agencies work with the family to develop a plan and provide supports and services.

A plan based on these reform efforts should be developed and piloted in two or three Kansas communities. Such a plan could build on the experience of the Case Management Project, which has been coordinated by the Children's Alliance. It could make use of current SRS staff and include contracting with community-based service providers.

While the improvements outlined above deal with the "front end" or before children and families enter the system, changes are also needed to the "back end" or after entering the system.

Fragmentation of service

Many families served by the CPS are also receiving services from other state and local agencies (e.g. health, mental health, housing, income supports). Families are caught in a maze of agencies whose caseworkers have little or no communication, and whose services are not coordinated to provide the families with a full array of needed supports.

Better coordination across agencies in the form of intake resource centers could get services to people who need them most. A good example is the Children, Youth and Families Resource Center in Topeka. It serves as a "one-stop shop" for families to gain access to the full continuum of care from a variety of agencies.

What's good for the child is good for the state

Children deserve a safe and stable environment. CPS reform will allow the state to solve problems before they get out of hand. Investing in prevention programs now will save the state money later.

Strengthen Prevention Programs

Family Preservation

Until we have a continuum of family support and prevention programs that can serve low and high-risk families, the child welfare system will continue to feel pressure from having thousands of children in out-of-home placements. Currently, family support and prevention services in Kansas are underdeveloped.

Intervention versus prevention

Family Preservation is a critical prevention-oriented program within SRS. Still, the agency's Web site describes it as "intensive in-home services offered to families who are in imminent danger of having a child come into the custody of the department and removed from their home unless the family can make the changes necessary to provide adequate care and safety." A prevention-focused approach would include serving families who are at risk of child abuse and neglect with programs such as the ones below.

What services are available?

In Kansas, the continuum of support services includes:

■ Healthy Start Home Visitors Program
Offers home visits to all pregnant women and mothers with infants under age one, with priority given to high-risk families. Home visitors provide information and referrals to support services, and screen for child abuse and neglect.

■ Parents As Teachers
An early childhood parent education and family support program serving families with children ages birth to three. The program is designed to enhance child development and school achievement through parent education accessible to all families.

■ Early Head Start and Head Start
Comprehensive child development programs which serve children from birth to age five, pregnant women and their families. They are child-focused programs and have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families.

■ Four-Year-Old-At-Risk Program
Provides early education services to four-year-olds who are considered at risk due to poverty, teen parents, minor developmental delays, limited English skills or other risk factors.

Features of programs proven effective with high-risk families:
- Initiated prenatally or at birth
- Voluntary participation
- Intensive (at least once a week) and long-term (3-5 years)
- Comprehensive, focusing on parents, parent-child interactions and child development
- Emphasis on linking families to a range of community services
- Ongoing and intensive staff training and evaluation

Gaps in services

Although the programs outlined above provide valuable services, the state lacks a continuum of care, especially at birth and for children between three- and five-years-old. Even when programs exist, many children do not have access because of limited service areas and limited funds.

Access for all

KAC has advocated for funding for programs such as Healthy Start and Parents as Teachers to make those programs available to all interested families. But many communities still lack those programs or have long waiting lists.

Better coordination

In addition to limited funds, lack of statewide coordination of family support and prevention programs is a serious problem. Existing programs are funded through several state agencies including SRS, Juvenile Justice Authority, Department of Health and Environment, Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Education. Statewide planning and coordination present ongoing challenges within those programs.

What's good for the child is good for the state

Perhaps nowhere is it clearer that prevention pays off than when comparing the costs of family preservation versus foster care. It costs about $4,000 a year to provide preservation services to a family with three children, but it can cost $75,000 a year if those children end up in foster care.

Effective Representation of the Child

Guardians Ad Litem

Studies in Kansas show foster and birth parents as well as children in foster care say they do not know who the guardian ad litem is and/or do not understand what GALs are supposed to do. Unfortunately, much of this lack of information is due to the often-untenable demands on GALs.

Complying with state guidelines requires a significant amount of time and effort (see box this page). This is time most GALs in Kansas do not have. In some metropolitan areas GALs have caseloads of over 400. The American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law recommends a caseload of 54 new cases per year for a full-time GAL.

But the problems with our GAL system are deeper than the demands growing out of large caseloads. There is no standardized training curriculum for GALs, and many may lack the specialized training needed to determine the best interest of the child, including an understanding of child development, the child welfare system and issues related to ethnic and cultural diversity. GALs also need continuing education on state and federal legislation and case law development.

At least three new approaches merit further consideration.

Statewide GAL system

A system that includes full-time attorneys who are knowledgeable about relevant current state and federal legislation and case law who understand the needs of children in the child welfare systems holds the promise of better quality representation and quicker resolution.

Guidelines for GALs

- Conduct a complete and thorough investigation, including interviews with all persons having information about the case.
- Determine the best interest of the child.
- Provide reports at every hearing.
- Appear at all hearings and present all relevant facts to the court, including the child's position if it differs from the opinion of the GAL.
- Explain the proceedings in terms the child can understand.
- Make recommendations for appropriate services for the child and the child's family.
- Monitor implementation of service plans and court orders.
- File appropriate pleadings on behalf of the child.
- Comply with threshold and yearly continuing education requirements.

The Kansas Legislature, following the 2001 recommendation of the Judicial Council's Guardian Ad Litem Advisory Committee, directed SRS to fund a $90,000 pilot project that would test the potential benefits of a statewide GAL system. That project was not funded because of budget shortfalls.

Mediation

Mediation is increasingly used as an alternative to litigation for a variety of legal issues. Mediation in Child In Need of Care cases can help all parties better understand the underlying issues and consider the full range of options.

The 2001 Kansas Legislature directed SRS to fund a pilot mediation project in Wichita, and Kansas Legal Services began the project in 2001. Due to budget cuts, SRS funding was eliminated at the end of December 2001. KLS secured funding from the Wichita SRS to continue the program until September 30, 2002.

GAL training

GALs need training on a broad array of topics. KLS provides this type of training and has received positive feedback on it. However, there is not enough funding to make the training accessible statewide or to offer a broad array of topics.

What's good for the child is good for the state

For almost all these GAL issues, there is a fiscal bottom line. Funding for GALs comes out of county budgets, and in many jurisdictions the level of funding is woefully inadequate. A GAL system that can truly represent the best interest of children will require significantly greater funding than is currently provided, and that will probably include a much larger state role in providing funding.

However, the cost of a statewide GAL system, for example, could well be offset by a reduction in cost of foster care and adoption resulting from children moving through the system more expeditiously. Mediation has been shown to reduce court time, increase compliance by parents as well as reduce time in foster care for children.

In addition, adequate funding for GALs could reach well beyond better representation in court. Because GALs are a cornerstone of the child welfare process, improving the works of GALs could go a long way toward solving the deeper problems of the entire system.

Effective Representation of the Child

CASA and CRB

Each year thousands of abused or neglected children in Kansas enter the court system through no fault of their own. These children must wade through a complex network of lawyers, social workers and judges who frequently are too overburdened to give thorough, detailed attention to each child who comes before them.

That is why Kansas needs to strengthen accountability and checks and balances in the foster care and adoption systems. One way to do that is to expand the reach of the Court Appointed Special Advocates and Citizen Review Board programs.

What is CASA?

CASA trains community volunteers to advocate for the best interest of a child involved in a court case. A CASA volunteer provides a judge with carefully researched background of the child to help determine if the child should stay with his or her parents or guardians, be placed in foster care, be placed with other relatives, or be freed for permanent adoption.

There are currently 23 CASA programs in Kansas. (See map for details.)

What are CRBs?

A Citizen Review Board (CRB) is comprised of three to seven community volunteers who hear cases involving children in the child welfare or juvenile justice system in a quasi-judicial process. The CRB listens to all interested parties before making recommendations to a judge about a child's placement and services. The programs are administered locally either through the District Court or by a not-for-profit agency.

Eight of the 31 judicial districts have certified CRB programs. (See map for details.)

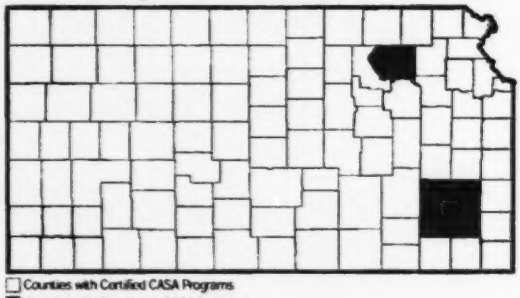
How are they Funded?

Since the first Kansas CASA began in 1980 in Wichita, the program has been funded through a combination of private and public funds. The state provides CASA with a base amount of $2,500 plus additional money based on cases filed in the district, number of cases served by the program and the program's budget.

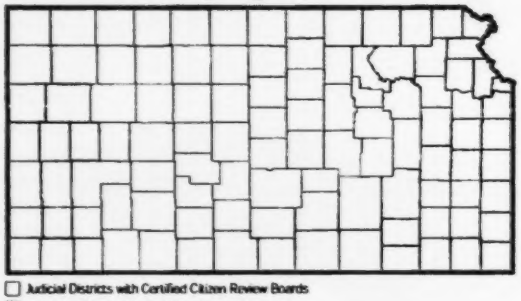
This system of funding creates gaps in services. CASA programs in more metropolitan areas have access to funding options such as United Way and can solicit resources from area businesses. But rural areas without those same opportunities struggle to keep programs operational.

CRBs needed funding when they were launched in 1992 because they are court-based and aren't permitted to raise money. The Permanent Family Fund was established, which raised the price of birth certificates from $7 to $10, with all increases going to the fund. The annual revenue of about $500K is split evenly between CASA and CRB programs. CASA and CRBs are working to increase user fees in order to expand access.

CASA programs in Kansas



Certified CRB programs in Kansas



What's good for the child is good for the state

Investing in accountability and checks and balances in Kansas' child welfare system pays off in the long run. Research suggests that children assigned CASA volunteers or those who are part of the CRB process tend to spend less time in court and less time in the foster care system than those without those services. Judges have also observed these children have better chances of finding permanent homes than children without the benefit of CASA or CRB.

Effective Representation of the Child

Child Welfare Outcomes

SRS introduced measurable performance standards for contractors in 1996 when Kansas attempted to reform the child welfare system by implementing a privatized form of managed care. Those standards were designed to monitor the safety, permanence and well-being of children and families.

While attempting to use such standards is commendable, several issues still need to be resolved:

■ There has never been a process to bring together stakeholders across Kansas to set outcomes and measures. Because of this, several segments of the child welfare process lack the sense of ownership necessary to embrace current standards. A high degree of community involvement is necessary in defining the needs, determining how to best meet those needs and evaluating progress.

■ The value of having performance standards is not in the standards themselves but in their use to reward good performance and correct problems. To this point, performance measures have been viewed by SRS as goals and not as standards, and it is not clear that they have been tied to accountability or consequences.

■ Kansas needs better outcomes and performance measures. For example, an outcome to track the success of foster care contractors is "40 percent of children placed in out-of-home care are returned to the family, achieve permanency or are referred for adoption within six months of referral to the contractor." Research indicates children who are placed back with their family too soon risk re-entering the system. While permanency is an important and desirable goal, it would be a mistake to force efforts at the expense of the right treatment or placement of the child.

■ Kansas has not adequately measured the well-being of children in the child welfare system. We have very little information about some of the things all parents worry about for their own children, such as their mental, emotional and physical health; their educational progress; and the quality of their friendships.

"The use of measurable performance standards was one of the early hallmarks of child welfare privatization in Kansas. We now need to go to the next level by fine tuning the measures, improving the quality of the supporting data, and instituting appropriate contractor incentives for meeting outcomes."

Gary Brunk
Kansas Action for Children executive director

What's good for the child is good for the state

Improving outcomes and measures may have the potential to transform treatment and prevention programs. Rather than reacting to problems when they emerge and dealing with them on a one-by-one basis, service providers and community leaders could use indicators of well-being to estimate risk, create strategic plans, articulate positive milestones for populations of at-risk children, and use those milestones to identify and build assets that support healthy development.

Effective Foster Care and Adoption

Foster Parents

Without the participation of thousands of committed foster parents, the current child welfare system could not function. Recognizing the important role foster parents play in the child welfare system, Kansas needs to provide better supports to those key players, especially when it comes to communication and training.

A report on the Foster Care Helpline, operated by Kansas Legal Services for children and families in the child welfare system, showed foster parents often:

- Do not understand the roles and responsibilities of social workers, GALs and other professionals.
- Do not have sufficient information about the children placed in their homes.
- Do not know whom they can contact for information or support.
- Are unable to identify the child's social worker or GAL.
- Are not informed about the outcomes of court hearings and case planning meetings.

The report also showed confusion exists about foster parents' role, rights and responsibilities:

- They are not encouraged to attend court hearings and case planning meetings, and sometimes feel that they are discouraged from attending.
- They do not understand they are supposed to do reports for the courts, and they are not prompted to do them; therefore, the reports often are not done.
- They are reluctant to ask questions or raise concerns about the case plan or other issues because they worry that the child will be taken from them.
- They refrain from making known their interest in adopting a child that is living with them because they are afraid it would taint the perception of their motive.

MAPP Foster Parent Training

(10 meetings)

1. Selection program
2. Foster care and adoption experience
3. Losses and Gains
4. Helping children with attachments
5. Helping children learn to manage their behaviors
6. Helping children with birth family connections
7. Gains and Losses: Helping children leave foster care
8. Understanding the impact of fostering or adopting
9. Perspectives in foster parenting and adoptive parenting
10. Endings and Beginnings

- If they are being investigated for possible abuse or neglect of a foster child, they do not understand the process or their rights.

Clear definition of foster parent rights and responsibilities

Several bills relating to the role of foster parents have been introduced in the Kansas legislature, including one that seeks to define their rights, reflects the frustration felt by a sizeable group of foster parents in some areas of the state. This situation is not unique to Kansas. Several states have enacted legislation codifying the rights and responsibilities of foster parents.

But before taking that step it may be helpful to build consensus on how to respond to the concerns behind the push for a foster parent "bill of rights." Key stakeholders might include foster parents from across the state, SRS, contractors and judges. Potential outcomes could be a greater understanding of the existing legal rights of foster parents, an agreement on the wording of a statement of rights and responsibilities, an agreement to include such wording in SRS contracts with private agencies in lieu of legislation or an agreement on draft legislation.

Training

Foster parents need training that is offered in locations and during times that are more accessible. They also need more in-depth training in topics such as independent living and problem behaviors. In response to the Child and Family Service Review, SRS has developed a program improvement plan that includes comprehensive education and training for foster parents.

What's good for the child is good for the state

The state is required to protect the vulnerable children in its care. Properly trained foster parents will enable the state to fulfill its obligation, while providing the best possible care for vulnerable children.

Effective Foster Care and Adoption

Independent Living/ Transitional Services

Every year thousands of young people in foster care turn 18 and leave foster care. This means that young people in state-supervised programs must leave whether or not they have the skills to maintain an apartment, seek and hold a job, or balance a checkbook.

Too many 18-year-olds emerge without having had a stable foster-care environment or adequate mental-health services or a quality education. These children are at extreme risk of poverty and homelessness, victimization and criminal involvement, illness, early childbearing, and low educational attainment. We need to change our thinking and improve the opportunities for these children to become productive citizens.

Federal funds

Under the John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act, a federal law enacted in 1999, states receive annual funds to provide independent living services to children 16 and older and to supplement the opportunities available to the 18- to 21-year-old population. Currently, in Kansas a portion of the money is distributed to private agencies contracted with the state who are expected to provide independent living services for 14- to 21-year–olds.

Tracking outcomes

Kansas needs reliable outcome information to better plan services for this population. There is little available data about emancipated foster youth. Systematic data collection before, during and after transition would enhance the state's ability to help transitioning youth.

Chafee mandates that states develop outcome measures to assess state performance in areas of educational attainment, employment, avoidance of dependency on public assistance, homelessness, out-of-wedlock births, high-risk behavior and incarceration.

Health care

Health care is a critical piece of self-sufficiency for foster kids. Almost all who age out of the foster care system have difficulty gaining access to health care. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that while almost 60 percent of former foster kids are covered under state Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) and Medicaid policies, many do not realize they qualify. Even when they do, complicated eligibility requirements often stand in their way.

Chafee provides increased resources, supports and matching funds to states willing to expand Medicaid coverage to youth 18 to 21 years of age who have aged out of foster care. Kansas currently does not take advantage of this legislation, missing the opportunity to provide this vulnerable population with a crucial key to successfully transitioning from the foster care system.

"To be successful in life we need to have a support system. Because if you don't have someone to talk to about anything or have a place to go to for the holidays, it can be very lonely."

Brenda Chamberlain
Kansas Youth Advisory Council chair and former foster care youth

What's good for the child is good for the state

After spending tens of thousands of dollars to care for children in foster care, it does not make sense to abandon them as young adults. According to one recent study, 12 to 18 months after they left foster care, half of those who left were unemployed and a third were receiving public assistance. Investing in programs to prepare foster children for the transition to adulthood would save the state money in the long run.

Effective Foster Care and Adoption

Adoption

Thousands of children in Kansas are waiting for permanent homes, especially those with special needs. The federal government has responded to the problem in recent years with new adoption incentives. The state needs to follow the federal government's lead in removing the financial barriers to adopting children in foster care.

Some conditions that make foster children a challenge to place in adoptive homes include:

- **Medical:** A child with chronic medical problems that require expensive treatment or medications.
- **Mental Health:** A child who has been maltreated and/or spent significant time in foster care may require intensive counseling.
- **Educational Services:** Children may have many educational disabilities that are not addressed through local school programs or may be approaching college age.
- **Legal Services:** A child might have problems with destruction of property, theft or sexual abuse of others.

Continuity of care

Adoption in Kansas is administered under a separate contract than foster care. This can cause problems with continuity of care. Consolidating foster care and adoption services would be a cost-effective way of improving services to children.

Incentives for foster parents to adopt older children

Foster parents worry about the same things as every other parent. When a child starts approaching college age, paying for escalating college costs looms as a disincentive to adoption.

Kentucky implemented a tuition assistance program to promote education opportunities for adopted children. Children who are adopted from state foster care can receive aid at public colleges and universities after applying for all other state, federal and public funds they may qualify for. Assistance for other approved expenses, such as clothing and incidentals, may be divided into payments throughout the semester.

Qualifying students must apply within four years of earning a high school diploma or GED. Students must maintain a grade point average of 2.0, apply for tuition assistance each semester and obtain summer employment or participate in a work-study program.

Incentives for contractors to get hard-to-place children adopted

Providers in Michigan's privatized adoption system are paid based on the difficulty of finding a child a home. Agencies are rewarded for achieving outcomes related to the timeliness of placement or for unique recruitment efforts.

- A premium rate is paid when a child is adopted directly from residential care and/or is adopted within five months of permanent wardship.
- An enhanced rate is paid for a child placed with a recruited family, is adopted within seven months of permanent wardship and/or is referred to another agency within three months of permanent wardship.
- A standard rate is paid when a child is adopted seven months after the date of permanent wardship and/or when a child is placed by another agency and the criteria for an enhanced fee does not apply.

What's good for the child is good for the state

A study by the Westat Corporation showed adoption assistance represents a substantial savings over foster care. The report estimated that federal and state governments will save a total of approximately $1.6 billion in connection with a group of 40,700 children adopted with assistance during a five-year period.

But the costs of foster care versus adoption can't be considered only in financial terms. There are other factors which make continued foster care more costly than adoption: the children's quality of life and their emotional, educational and social outcomes. Adopted children, as other studies have shown, are far more likely to stay out of jail and to be productive taxpaying citizens than children who age out of the foster care system.

Glossary

Child In Need of Care (CINC)
A child determined by the court to have been physically, mentally or emotionally abused or neglected, or sexually abused.

Child Protective Services (CPS)
Services designed to protect children whose lives or health are jeopardized because of abusive acts or negligence.

Citizen Review Board (CRB)
A board of community volunteers who hear cases involving children in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems in a quasi-judicial process and make recommendations to a judge about a child's placement and services.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
A community volunteer who advocates for the best interest of a child involved in a court case by making recommendations to a judge about a child's placement and services.

Family Preservation
Short-term, intensive home-based therapy for families at risk of having their children removed from the home.

Foster Parent "Bill of Rights"
State legislation that defines the rights and responsibilities of foster parents.

Guardian Ad Litem (GAL)
An attorney appointed to represent the interest of minor children involved in a court case.

Independent Living
Services for young people in the child welfare system designed to help them as they transition to adulthood.

John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee)
Federal legislation designed to help youth transition from foster care to adulthood by providing opportunities for additional education or training, housing assistance, health care and other services.

Model Approach to Partnerships and Parenting Foster Parent Training (MAPP)
Training designed to prepare individuals and families to become a foster or adoptive family.

Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS)
The state agency charged with administering social services including child support, disability payments, foster care, Medicaid, Medicare and food assistance.

Resources

Child Welfare Organizations

Kansas CASA Association
103 E. 27th, Unit C
Hays, KS 67601
(785) 625-3049
(888) CASA191
email: kansascasa@ruraltel.net
net: www.kansascasa.homestead.com/webpage.html

Citizen Review Boards
Office of Judicial Administration
Kansas Judicial Center
301 W. 10th, Room 2N
Topeka, KS 66612-1507
(785) 296-4859
net: www.kscourts.org/programs/citznrvu.htm

SRS
Marilyn Jacobson,
Director Child Welfare
915 Harrison, 6th floor
Topeka, KS 66612
(785) 296-3271
net: www.srskansas.org

SRS Independent Living Coordinator
Patti Dawson, Program Administartor
CPS/Family Support Unit
Docking State Office Building
915 SW Harrison, 5th floor
Topeka, KS 66612
(785)368-8190
email: pad@srskansas.org

Children's Alliance
Bruce Linhos, Executive Director
212 SW 7th
Topeka, KS 66603
(785) 235-5437
email: blinhos@childally.org
net: www.childally.org

Kansas Legal Services
Children's Advocacy Resource Center
Leslie Klosterhoff, Intake Specialist
712 S. Kansas Ave, Suite 200
Topeka, KS 66603
(785) 234-8345
(877) 298-2674
net: www.kansaslegalservices.org

Kansas Children's Service League
Coming Home (adoption program)
Sandra Retter, Intake Coordinator
300 SW Oakley Ave.
Topeka, KS 66606
(785) 274-3100
email: sretter@kcsl.org
net: www.cominghomekansas.org

Child Welfare Contractors

Kansas Children's Service League
Joe Whitaker, Interim CEO
1365 North Custer
Box 517
Wichita, KS 67201
(316) 942-4261
email: jwhitaker@kcsl.org

United Methodist Youthville
John R. Francis, President/CEO
P.O. Box 210
Newton, KS 67114
(316) 283-1950 ext. 107
(800) 593-1950
email: jfrancis@youthville.org
net: www.youthville.org

DCCCA Center
Bruce Beale, Executive Director
3312 Clinton Parkway
Lawrence, KS 66047
(785) 841-4138
email: bbeale@dccca.org

St. Francis Academy
Rev. Canon Phillip Rapp, President
509 E. Elm Street
P.O. Box 1340
Salina, KS 67401
(785) 825-0541
(800) 423-1342
email: info@st-francis.org
net: www.st-francis.org

Kaw Valley Center
B. Wayne Simms, CEO
759 Vermont
Kansas City, KS 66101
(913) 621-4641
email: bwaynesimss@kvc.org

The Farm, Inc.
Peg Martin, CEO/President
Box 2224
Emporia, KS 66801
(620) 343-7746
email: pegm@the-farm.org
net: www.the-farm.org

Foster Parents Associations

Kansas Foster and Adoptive Families, Inc.
Sandi Clear, Executive Director
email: director@kfaf.org
net: www.kfaf.org

Foster Children of Johnson County, Inc.
Lisa Shikles, President
4744 Roundtree Ct.
Shawnee Mission, KS 66226
(913) 422-4792
email: slshikles@earthlink.net

KANSAS ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Making a difference for Kansas children.

Our work

The misson of Kansas Action for Children is to advocate for policies and programs that ensure and improve the physical, emotional and educational well-being of all Kansas children and youth. KAC is an independent and nonpartisan voice on their behalf.

■ We paint the picture of Kansas children by gathering and publicizing data on child well-being through the Kansas Children's Report Card, the Kansas KIDS COUNT Data Book and special reports.

■ We advance alternatives by developing state policy that is child, youth and family friendly. Over the years, programs related to early childhood development, teen pregnancy, preventive health care, citizen's review boards, services to children in troubled families have stemmed from our work.

■ We build the base of citizen advocacy for children and youth by working with citizens and organizations across the state. We believe that hundreds of citizens speaking out for children can help create communities that support families and children.

Kansas Action for Children Inc.
3360 SW Harrison
Topeka, KS 66611

PHONE: 785-232-0550
FAX: 785-232-0699
E-MAIL: kac@kac.org
WEB SITE: www.kac.org

KANSAS ACTION FOR CHILDREN

Making a difference for Kansas children.

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